

The Problem of Evil

I. The Argument

- 1) If an OOG (omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good being) existed, there would be no evil.
(Assumption)
- 2) There is evil. (Assumption).
- 3) There is no OOG.

II. Objections

Premise 1

- a) *Evil for Good Reasons Objection* - good results will be brought about by the evil. Response: (i) Is the evil necessary for the good? Remember – we’re talking about an omnipotent god! (ii) Does the good outweigh the evil?
- b) *Evil as Necessary for Free Will Objection* - Response: (i) Problems with omniscience and free will. (ii) Does the good outweigh the evil? What’s so great about free will (iii) Natural disasters? (iv) Why can’t we have free will without the ability to bring about disastrous consequences for others?
- c) *The Logical Impossibility Objection* – if things could be infinitely better or infinitely worse, and evil can include a lack of good things, then there’s no world that God could make which would have no evil. Response: (i) At very least there could be no pain. (ii) Maybe things can’t get infinitely better and infinitely worse. (iii) This just shows that we shouldn’t say that God is good to begin with. In what sense is he good? What would it mean for a God to be bad?

Premise 2

- a) *The We Don’t Know What’s Good Objection* – Maybe suffering really is good and we’re just too dumb to understand. Response: (i) “Good” can’t just mean – whatever God values (Euthyphro problem). Assuming goodness is independent of what God values, we need to determine whether or not God is good by using our conception of good.

General Objection

- a) *The We Can’t Understand God’s Ways Objection* – we shouldn’t accept this argument because we can’t trust that our own reasoning is sufficient for understanding beings like God. Response: Inference to the best explanation. Why believe that God is good but we can’t understand why instead of just believing that there is no God or that God is not good?

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